

Vital News

The newsletter of "Vital Communicators Toastmasters Club
Club 7056, Division A, District 74



October 2003

To E- or not to E

Willem le Roux, President

When is it right to make use of this powerful communication medium, instead of using the "old fashioned" phone? Or should a personal message be sent to all the members of a club or other organisation?

When you are upset about something which concerns the club, first take it up with the person who is responsible for the matter only, personalising your E-mail for that person only, or phone that person and sort out the matter. If you do not get the desired results, then take it up with the President, (again personalising your message), who will then sort it out. If you still do not get the desired results, there is always a business session where you can put the item on the agenda as a "contentious matter", and where it should then be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

If you sent E-mail which should be personalised to all the club members, it will do unnecessary damage to the club's spirit, and it may scare away members who recently joined. So please think twice before using your E-mail and unnecessarily upsetting everyone. This is not only true for Toastmasters, but a rule one should apply in your professional as well as your social life.

Toastmasters in real life

Carel Roets, Sergeant-at-arms

I have recently had the opportunity to apply what I have learned in Toastmasters twice in two week.

As most of you know, it was my wedding on 13 September 2003. As I do not get married often, I had to read up a little on the proper procedure to follow when conducting such a ceremony. I found most my inform from bridal magazines that had articles on how to conduct the proceedings properly. The interesting part is that two of the magazines that I read from, recommended that the groom attend a Toastmasters club to better his public speaking ability before attempting his speech ... I felt qualified. I applied the basic principles that I was taught and my speech was a success.

When I made my choice for master of ceremonies, I considered just that and contacted a Toastmasters friend from a my previous club in Swaziland. He rose to the occasion and did an excellent job. The following interesting tips came from the articles that we read:

Never thank somebody that got paid to provide a service. It makes the list of people too long and compromises the sincerity;

Welcome the parents of the groom as guests of honour to the parents of the bride; and

Do not include the position of the toilet as part of your speech. The position is usually well indicated.

A week after the wedding, I was asked by close friends to deliver a few words at their son's 21st birthday. I was nervous at first, but then later thought to myself that I have had good training and ample exposure through Toastmasters. I therefore recollected myself, stuck to the basics and delivered an eight minute speech in front of 15 people without a moment's hesitation.

After my speech I was complimented by a number of guests. The greatest reward was when a guy that was in sales said that he is really interested in joining Toastmasters, as he was now convinced of the advantages. His words were: I will be able to make a better impression without my clients noticing a difference!"

You see fellow Toastmaster, the advantage of our organisation presents itself regularly. It is up to us to bridge the gap between theory and reality.

Following Dave ...

Willem le Roux, President

Dave Cairns won the District Humorous Competition this year for the second time. I followed his success from club level, to Area A2 competition, to the Division A competition and to the finals during the Fantasticon conference. Not only did he put up a fantastic performance - CONCRATULTIONS Dave!!!! - I also learned a few things by watching him, which I would like to share with you.

At a humorous competition, the contents of the speech is not the most important factor, it is all in the delivery. In the humorous manual, speech no. 5, it is explained that in an all out humorous speech the purpose is to entertain while the message is less important, although there must be a central theme. What I however did not realize is that the deliverance is more important than the humour itself. On paper some of the competitors in the trials could have won, but in the delivery Dave was King.

Practice makes perfect, not only at home but also in trial runs in front of audiences. I could literally see how Dave improved at each round. In between he also delivered his speech at any opportunity he got at other clubs. At the next competition our club definitely should have our club competition earlier, to give more time for practice before the area competition.

Going more than 30 seconds over time could be any one's downfall. In the Humorous competitions it is important to provide time for laughter. At club level there might be a reasonable amount of laughter, at area level none, at division a reasonable amount, and at the finals a lot. Be sure to make provision for this. Dave nearly got disqualified in the finals because of all the laughter his speech evoked. That would have been ironic - if he got disqualified because his humorous speech received too much laughter!!!

Following Dave through all the levels of the humorous competition could be of some help, but following Dave's example would be even better. I urge all the members of Vital communicators to attend at least your own area and division contests as well as the national conference. Not only do competitors need your attendance to excel, you yourself will enjoy it and learn a lot from it!!!

Maintaining a complicated life is a great way to avoid changing it.
- Elaine St. James

What an enriching experience

Susan le Roux, Vice-President: Education

What an enriching experience! Not only was this conference a lesson in excellent planning (every part of the programme ran like clockwork) but the contents were of a very high standard. I heard quite a few old-timers say that this must be one of the best conferences which they ever attended.

The motivational speaker, Victor Vermeulen is one of those people one has to hear at least once in your life, in order to cure you from ever complaining again. Just imagine being paralysed from the neck down for the rest of your life at the tender age of 19, especially when you were such a good sportsman, and then, after teaching yourself to breath again, becoming a highly entertaining motivational speaker with a catching sense of humour.

The two workshops were likewise interesting, educational and entertaining. Dr Piet Muller, well-known futurist, entertained his audience with some thought-provoking predictions



Victor Vermeulen and his mom Isobel

about the immediate and the more distant future. He predicts that people will get up to 200 years of age, changing (and training for) different careers all the time.

Marcus Brewster, with his workshop entitled "PR Power - Seven Steps to make the Media Love your Toastmasters Story", was a must for every VPPRO!

The American Auction which Stephen Potgieter conducted during lunch, was a tremendous success and brought in just under R1000!

The best, however, was yet to come when we were entertained by Nataniël at the black tie masquerade, where everyone wore the most beautiful masks! After Nataniël's show and a lovely dinner, the Toastmasters showed their true spirit by dancing the night away.

Make yourself a promise never to miss a Toastmasters conference again. Nowhere can you be entertained, educated, make so many likeminded new friends, and just enjoy yourself, as at a Toastmasters conference. It really is a privilege to be a Toastmaster - make sure that you make full use of what it offers!

Safety in the suburbs

Bill Connelly

In our present situation where crime is rife, the question is whose responsibility is safety?

One workable answer is community policing. This requires shared ownership, decision-making and accountability, as well as a sustained commitment from both the police and the community.

Shared ownership does not mean that individual residents take the law into their own hands or attempt to enforce the law on their own. It does mean that members of the community work with the police, for example to identify and prioritise the problems that plague your community, to develop and implement innovative and effective responses to problems, to determine appropriate allocation of resources and to evaluate and modify responses required to achieve the desired results.

How to help ensure a safe environment

- Keep your house locked whether you are in or out;
- Have a visible street number on your gate;
- Know your neighbourhood and draw upon available resources in your community such as friends, local police station, hospital and fire station;
- Have telephone numbers for the above ready in case of an emergency;
- Keep your house locked, whether you are in or out;
- Don't leave your door unlocked for someone planning to come later;
- Don't let strangers in your home;
- If a stranger wants to use your phone, do not open the door, dial the number on her/his behalf if you want to help;
- Make sure all windows and doors are secured with burglar proofing or security gates;
- Install security lights in all the areas like carports, outside stairs, alleys and patios;
- Check peoples references before employing them;
- Be alert of people loitering in residential streets, if they act suspicious, call the police.

The bottom line is to forget about the idea that crime is the police's problem. You yourself can do many things to help ensure that you do not become a victim of crime. Be alert (not phobic) at all times, think of ways to make it difficult for the criminal e.g. not leaving valuables in plain site in your car. Make use of all the tips, discuss them with family and friends, learn through the mistakes of others.

Let's fight crime together

More security tips can be found in the crime prevention section at the site: www.saps.gov.za

Editor's note ...

It was only a short while ago when I took over as VP: PRO and already I have had all the support I could wish for. For that I thank all of you. This year I really thought I could just cruise along, no more Exco duties nor Exco meetings – at last another free Monday evening per month for me. Wishful thinking! Not only PRO duties but also thrown in into the FantastiCon – the mini conference. What fun it was again. I remember the first time I was involved was the conference at a hotel in Pretoria and I was on crutches! Well a lot can be done seated and besides my tongue was not on crutches. There was the conference at the CSIR and Pieter-Dirk Uys our guest artist. And then there was the conference held at St Georges Hotel – on my doorstep. Each and every one so different and every time I felt so good contributing a bit towards smoother registry and making conditions for the delegates easier and user friendlier. That way we ensure they attend the following conference.

Back to our newsletter. Once again I want Vital Communicators to have the best production – but only with your help. Please, those of you who contributed do not rest on your laurels. We have two more publications to deliver before the end of the Toastmasters year. Start collecting articles now already. It need not be long articles, but it must be interesting, or motivational, but it must be positive. **NO NEGATIVE ARTICLES WILL BE PUBLISHED** – negativity has a psychological bad effect on readers. Hence my refusal of any negative articles printed.

Cooks Dauth

The amazing thing about the human brain is the way that it starts working as soon as you're born and stops the minute you are called to speak in public.

Getting to know ...

Susan le Roux, Vice-President: Education

At school I refused to do verbal exams, and was content to get naught – even when my matric results were in jeopardy. Do you recognise one of our most well-known members? It is non other than Frances. She made the above statement in an article about her published by the magazine "Rooi Rose" in October. Frances goes on to say that when she did her first speech after joining Toastmasters, she almost burst into tears and could scarcely speak two meaningful words one after another. And yet, this very same lady recently organised the Fantasticon conference with confidence and flair. Nowadays she can stand up and speak her mind in any audience. How did this change come about, and what has Frances achieved since she joined Toastmasters? It reads like a story:

In 1994 she joined Telephonix Toastmasters Club. In 1995 she moved to Vital Communicators club and in the past eight years she has served her club on various levels. Vital Communicators has been one of the Top Ten Clubs in District 74 for three years in a row until two years ago. She is very proud of the club's successes. Last year the club again achieved President Distinguished status thanks to her organisational skills and motivational leadership.

Since her first speech in February 1994, she delivered some forty "manual" speeches to achieve her Advanced Toastmaster Gold qualification in March 2000. In addition, she has also had the privilege of being involved with Club Officer Training (her training of the VPE's at the COT training session in June was excellent!), Speechcraft and Youth Leadership sessions where she could apply her skills. Frances really comes into her own at Youth Leadership Courses. Not only is it evident that she enjoys these courses, but the children really adore her. She has the ability to

get the best out of the children, for their own benefit.

With the introduction of the split between the Communication and Leadership development areas by Toastmasters International, she opted to progress on both the tracks. She is currently working towards her Distinguished Toastmaster award.

During her year as Area Governor her area was recognised as President's Distinguished Area as well as the Top Area in Toastmasters Southern Africa. This achievement was again bestowed upon her during her year as Division Governor when the Division did exceptionally well and was recognised as a President's Distinguished Division as well as the top Division in Southern Africa.

Frances started her working career at the Egg Board and later moved to Telkom where she joined their Toastmaster's Club. After doing Toastmasters for just over a year, she gained so much confidence that she applied for a much more taxing job at the CSIR, which inter alia demands good communicational skills. She also gave computer training.

Frances isn't married (yet), but very fond of children, especially her two godchildren. She loves baking, as it gives her time to think.

It is clear that Frances gained a lot from Toastmasters, but only because she was willing to put in a lot. So, as Frances does, do not only ask what Toastmasters can do for you: rather ask what you can do for Toastmasters, and as Frances, you will be pleasantly surprised to find how much more you will grow within yourself, and how satisfying it is to see others grow! Well done Frances, you are an example worth following.

A new member's anticipation

Joan Visagie

A few years ago, I wanted to join Toastmasters, however, I heard about impromptu speeches and um-ah counters and decided that it was not for me ... When I eventually decided to go to a meeting to see what it is all about I was pleasantly surprised, and realised that it was not all that frightening. The members are great and when you make an idiot of yourself everyone reassures you that they were there as well. As a new Toastmaster, I really enjoy the great learning experience!

I have received so much joy of been a member of Vital Communications over the past 13 years, my confidence level has improved, I am able to chair meetings at work with complete ease. The other aspect is that I have met so many nice people over that time. In short it has been a learning experience. I am looking forward to the next 13 years
Brian Tomlin

Vital Communicators
Toastmasters Club
PO Box 2451
Brooklyn Square
0075 South Africa

www.geocities.com/vc_tm

Publisher:

Willem le Roux
President
Tel: (012) 347 1712
Cell: 082 499 2377

Editor:

Cooks Dauth
Vice-President: Public Relations
Tel: (012) 347 8024

